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SPECIAL BULLETIN A
ARTEL (Fike Chemical) Site
Nitro, Putnam County, West Virginia

To: Regional Response Center
U.S. EPA Region III

Date: June 12, 1988

From: Benton M. Wilmoth
Sr. On-Scene Coordinator (3HW22)

Thru: Stephen R. Wassersug, Director
Hazardous Waste Management Division (3HW00)

Thru: Thomas Voltaggio, Chief
Superfund Branch (3HW20)

Thru: Steve Jarvela, Chief
Emergency Response Section (3HW22)

I. INTRODUCTION

A preliminary assessment performed by OSC Benton Wilmoth in accordance with the National Contingency Plan has identified an immediate and significant risk of harm to human health and the environment posed by the presence of uncontrolled hazardous materials. An abandoned chemical facility containing a railcar of methyl mercaptan, deteriorating drums of nitric acid and other organic chemicals, and also an extremely large supply of pure metallic sodium are present on site.

Section 104 of CERCLA calls for the initiation of immediate removal where there is a threat of release or contact of a hazardous substance which may present an imminent and substantial danger to public health.

The Delegation of Authority 14-1-A (9/13/87) authorizes the OSC to approve CERCLA removals with a total cost of less than \$50,000. The OSC, therefore, approved the use of CERCLA funds at this site to mitigate the threat to human health and the environment by securing and removing the hazardous substances to proper temporary storage and final disposal.

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II. BACKGROUND

The ARTEL (Fike Chemical) Site is located in Nitro, Putnam County, West Virginia. The company is presently in the process of bankruptcy and has abandoned the facility.

On June 10, 1988 EPA Emergency Response Section was notified by the West Virginia DNR as to the uncontrolled situation at the chemical facility. Security guards at the site reported that the regular work force is not on site and therefore the facility is vacant. The guards have no knowledge of the plant operations.

On June 11, 1988 EPA OSC Benton Wilmoth made a visual inspection of the site with Bill White, Chief of Kanawha County Emergency Services, Gary Morris, Chief of WV State Office of Emergency Services, and Ava Zeitz, Chief of RCRA Section. The inspection revealed a warehouse type laboratory containing several hundred large glass containers of chemical reagents, most of which were unlabelled. He also observed an extremely large supply of metallic sodium which may be in an unstable condition. The owners of the facility had stored their waste water containing hazardous material in a lagoon from plant process area. Also noted inside the plant process area were several hundred scattered drums of unlabelled chemical materials and many large tanks in extremely poor condition.

When ARTEL Chemical abandoned the facility, all utilities at the plant were terminated due to non payment of bills. Therefore normal stabilization actions for materials on site is impossible.

III. THREAT

The threat to human health and the environment posed by the presence of the abandoned chemical facility is substantial. The facility lies approximately 1000 feet from the business district and residential section of Nitro, WV. The environment is threatened by the close proximity of the lagoon to the Kanawha River and the city.

Methyl mercaptan is highly mutigenic and has flash of 0 degrees Fahrenheit and a boiling point of 43 degrees Fahrenheit. Since the utilities are disconnected, there is no way to cool the tankcar therefore potential explosion exists.

According to the State officials the plant has no workers inside to monitor gauge and valve systems of more than 100 tanks of various chemicals.

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IV. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work proposed for implementation with the emergency \$50K appropriation includes: 1) Stabilization of the methyl mercaptan railcar, 2) Stabilization of the deteriorated drums containing various organic solvents and chemicals 3) Temporary Storage (if necessary), and 4) Final Disposal of the hazardous materials.

The authorized budget for this \$50K removal is:

EPA	\$	2,500
EPA HQ. (15%)		7,500
TAT		5,000
ERCS		35,000

TOTAL	\$	50,000

V. OSC ACTION

On June 11, 1988 the OSC issued Delivery Order No. 7445-03-050 to ERCS Contractor (OH Materials of Findlay, Ohio) in the amount of \$35,000 to initiate removal actions aimed at mitigating the threat to human health and the environment.

At this time, the Potential Responsible Parties have been located but could not be contacted. All the site information will be forwarded to EPA Enforcement Section.

Because the conditions at the ARTEL (Fike Chemical) Site meet the conditions of Section 300.65 of the National Contingency Plan for immediate removal, the OSC has approved this immediate stabilization activity at this site.

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